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"MISS 31"  
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By Florence Lillian Henderson  
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Chester Merrill was lonesome—that was, in fact, his normal condition of late. He had left a little country village to better himself amid the larger opportunities of a great city and had succeeded. There was no complaint on the score of income and progress. His success, however, was the result of close application to his office duties and studious hours in his solitary room.

There was little adornment to the place, for he had followed simple tastes since coming to the city. In one window there was a flower box, thickly planted with morning glories. In the other was a tiny cage and a canary bird. The former occupant of the room, when leaving for a distant city the day that Chester arrived, stated his inability to care for the bird. Would the newcomer accept it at the original cost of the cage alone? Merrill consented. It had been quite some company. Every morning it tuned its mellow song to notes of harmony. Every evening it chirped him a genuine welcome.

Just across the court, 20 feet away, Merrill had discovered one day a lady with a little girl on her lap. They were listening to the singing of the bird and the little one was clapping her tiny hands in delight and reaching toward the canary as if eager to possess and pet it.

Merrill went down to see his landlady after a minute or two of reflection. He saw a way of completing satisfactorily a plan that had lingered in his mind for several days.

"Mrs. Agnew," he spoke to his landlady, "there is a young lady and a child in a room in the next building."

"I know whom you mean," promptly announced Mrs. Agnew — "Miss 31."

"Miss Thirty-one?" repeated Chester vaguely,

"That is what they call her, or at least my sister, who is landlady of the next building, does."

"Rather a queer name, isn't it?"

"She has given no other. She came there a month ago with the little girl, does light housekeeping, goes out very little, pays her room-rent on the dot, troubles nobody and has no company whatever."

"H'm! Something of a mystery," commented Merrill. "However, that



She Spelled Out Three Words.

is her business. I noticed the little child today and she seemed quite in love with my canary. As the cold weather comes on my room will be chilly, without heat during the day. I was thinking of selling or giving poor Dick away. I believe the little one and her mother would take good care of the bird. And they are so lonesome, never going out. Dick might be quite some company to them, don't you think? Now, could